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How Culture Patterns Influence Environmental Orientation among Norwegian Youth

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Another Look at Culture and Nature: How Culture Patterns Influence Environmental Orientation among Norwegian Youth

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ABSTRACT
To what extent are young people's attitudes toward environmental issues part of broader culture patterns? Based on a survey of 3,810 Norwegian young people aged 15–22, four culture profiles were identified through factor analysis. Environmental orientation was measured by means of the New Ecological Paradigm scale, the importance ascribed to sustained economic growth and to fighting pollution, and membership in environmental organizations. Different aspects of environmental orientation turned out to be tied to different culture profiles, and through these profiles also to class and gender. Two extremes emerged. A 'critical' environmental perspective (resembling a 'deep ecology' position) was closely tied to a culture profile labelled 'radical counterculture', which had its basis within the 'humanistic social intermediate strata'. Anti-environmental attitudes were closely tied to a culture profile labelled 'redneck', based within the manual working class. However, no culture profile emerged as exclusively 'environmentalist', in that three profiles (all except 'redneck') were tied to some 'environment friendly' attitudes. The findings point to the importance of avoiding simplistic interpretations of environmental concern as a unidimensional phenomenon ranging from strong to weak.

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1. Introduction

How should we understand concepts like 'environmental awareness' and 'environmental concern', and how does such awareness or concern come about? Although some discussion of the concepts is present in empirical studies of how humans think and feel about the environment, there is generally not much attention being paid to the obvious diversity of attitudes that could be labelled 'pro-environmental'. Personal experience and various forms of information, be it through media coverage, government campaigns or environmental education, will affect the development of environmental concern. However, such factors are obviously not the only ones that influence attitudes and beliefs. Simple everyday observations reveal a great diversity of attitude packages concerning environmental problems and human relations to nature. This diversity cannot possibly stem only from differential access to information or from variations in personal experience of environmental problems.

If we want to influence people's attitudes toward the environment, we must understand how such attitudes are part of systems of interpretation and meaning – that is, how they are embedded in culture patterns. If such patterns bestow different meanings upon the

same issue in different segments of the populace, then we are simply not talking about the same thing. Driving cars is a pivotal culture element for some working class youngsters (Skogen 1998), loaded with symbolic meanings regarding masculinity, technical skills and freedom. For them, information about the advantages (environmental and otherwise) of public transportation does not touch the core of the behaviour we want to alter. Like health information campaigns, many attempts to communicate environmental messages are based on a very primitive conception of the relationship between information and attitudes: if the information is sufficiently clear and logical, then people will understand how things 'really' are, and how to act accordingly. As we know, the impact of health information differs substantially from one group to another, depending among other things on the meanings attributed to the detrimental behaviours in question. Smoking, drinking and eating meat mean different things to different groups, and the senders of messages about negative health effects also have very different standings with different groups. The parallels to communication about environmental issues are obvious.

Several perspectives on the formation of environmental concern exist within the social sciences. Beck (1992) argues that industrial society has entered a new era, where global hazards brought about by new technology and economic internationalization are forging new alliances based on shared risks. Beck also ties the handling of risk perception to the individualization process characteristic of the era he labels 'reflexive modernity', where modernization is gradually releasing people from structural constraints. This provides a foundation for challenging established scientific and technical 'truths' (about the impact of technology on the environment, for example), as the power bases for indisputable knowledge are crumbling due to structural and cultural change.

Douglas (1992) focuses on the individualism of the contemporary dominant culture in western industrialized societies. This cultural trait places the safety of individuals at center stage, and at the same time traditional knowledge systems are challenged through the individualization of knowledge. Reasonably resourceful groups that feel aggrieved can utilize what they perceive as knowledge about environmental risk to cast blame on those they feel are responsible for putting people's (or the planet's) health and well-being at risk. Casting blame on certain groups for causing danger or damage has always been used politically, but what is new is the universal opportunity to do so.

Although Beck and Douglas stress the cultural and collective dimensions of environmental risk perception in contemporary industrialized societies, environmental danger jeopardizing the health and happiness of individuals is at the heart of the matter. However, both seem to deal with risk perception without much explicit empirical foundation (cf. Draper 1993). How, and in what forms, environmental awareness is evolving (for example, what part the perception of individual risk actually plays) therefore seems to remain a matter of conjecture. Precisely how the obviously quite diverse forms of awareness are distributed among different groups is no chief concern with any of them.

What might be termed 'culturalist' theories of new social movements (Scott 1990) focus on ideological ecology as part of cultural forms emerging in the new fields of social conflict that spring from the transition into post-industrial society. In this perspective, the new environmental movement is a counterculture movement against modernity (Eder 1993), or an exponent of a new reflexivity, embedded in new cultural and cognitive patterns (Touraine 1981). Environmental awareness is seen as part of a cultural and ideological package, comprising 'a relationship with nature opposed to the institutionalized, dominant relationship defined by the idea that man should conquer nature' (Eder 1993:130), and a fundamental critique of industrial capitalism. Such an understanding of the paradigmatic foundation of the new environmental movement touches upon core principles within the philosophical perspective of 'deep ecology'. Perhaps the most crucial aspect of deep ecology is the concept of ecocentrism, as opposed to the anthropocentrism that is central not only to industrialism, but also to the 'shallow ecology' movement. 'Shallow ecology' is the basis for fighting pollution and resource depletion with an aim to secure the health and affluence of people in the developed countries, whereas the ecocentric worldview holds that humans are an integral part of nature as a totality. This should eventually form a basis for solidarity with all of nature, because we are part of it and it is part of us (Næss 1973; Deval 1991; Eckersley 1992).

But who exactly is mobilized in the

ecological movement? The issue of class is central to analyses of the environmental movement in this perspective. The dominance of certain middle-class fractions within the environmental movement is empirically beyond dispute. Studies conducted in several industrialized countries conclude that it derives its fundamental support from those groups within the middle class that are highly educated, employed in 'non-productive' sectors (public services, teaching, arts, etc.) and have incomes in the medium range (Cotgrove & Duff 1980; Morrison & Dunlap 1986; Kriesi 1989; Eckersley 1989). The 'new middle classes' are 'doubly opposed to the class structure of industrialized societies: opposed to its dominant classes and opposed to its dominated classes' (Eder 1993:134). They possess the cultural characteristics that, along with the environmental threats to the high quality of life they value so much, make them the vanguard of the ecology movement seen as a counterculture movement.

We have now dealt with the environmental *movement*. However, we may assume that similar links between culture patterns and environmental attitude formation exist in the general population. That is, in the vast majority of people who do not in any sense participate in the environmental movement, but among whom scores of different combinations of attitudes toward the environment can surely be found. The concept of 'environmental orientation' is meant to cover orientation, or attitudes, toward nature and our physical environment regardless of congruence with views central to environmentalism. Such orientation will obviously be part of a general 'worldview', which is always closely tied to culture patterns.

It seems fruitful to consider the risk perception perspective and the cultural shift perspective as complementary contributions. Following this line of thought, we may hypothesize that forms of environmental concern that are tied to the perception of threats to the health and well-being of individuals are not very strongly tied to particular culture patterns. Such forms of concern could be expected to prevail throughout the population, along with concern for other threats to life quality, such as crime, unemployment or health hazards. On the other hand, forms of environmental concern that approach a 'deep ecology' perspective, and comprise a critical stance toward industrialism itself, could be expected to be more closely tied to particular culture patterns; patterns that include or facilitate a critique of multiple features of modern society. However, rather than 'shallow' and 'deep', the terms 'pragmatic' and 'critical' have much to recommend them, not least in order to keep some distance from the strong normative core of the philosophical tendency of deep ecology.

The focus of this article is young people's environmental concern. This is important for several reasons. First, in the public discourse the environmental movement is often associated with youth. Young people are frequently the most visible participants in spectacular actions undertaken by environmental organizations. Young people are also supposed to have a strong interest in preserving the environment, as they 'shall inherit the earth'. Secondly, some scholars perceive youth as particularly susceptible to the social forces of the late modern era. The old collective identities, which were mainly rooted in class positions now eroded through the decline of industrial manufacturing and the expansion of the educational system, are thought to have lost their grip on the identity formation that takes place in adolescence. The ensuing process of 'individualization' leaves individuals to themselves when facing the formidable task of constructing their identities (cf. Beck 1992; Lash 1994; Melucci 1996). In this perspective, the new social movements are particularly interesting as arenas for identity formation, as they could be regarded as 'laboratories for the creation of personal identities' (Peterson & Thörn 1994:23). Empirically, environmental concern has been found to be stronger in younger people than in older (Jones & Dunlap 1992; Scott & Willits 1994), but there are indications that this relationship may have weakened (Howell & Laska 1992) or even disappeared (Hellevik 1996). However, shifts in young people's attitudes toward the environment have not received much research attention. Indeed, Furlong and Cartmel (1997) conclude that there is a general deficiency regarding our knowledge of young people's changing political orientations. They remark that 'while there is a wealth of information on changes in the political behavior of adults, political scientists have tended to neglect the study of youth' (Furlong & Cartmel 1997:96).

Except class, two important factors could be expected to influence both cultural identification and environmental orientation, namely gender and urbanization. It is commonly postulated that relations to nature are influ-

enced by gender. This is the very basis of ecofeminism, a school of thought that claims that women are closer to nature than men. According to Jackson (1993) there seem to be two pillars in ecofeminist thought: both women and nature create and sustain life (and thus the caring role of women is easily extended to caring for nature), and both women and nature are colonized and exploited within the male-dominated, technocratic industrial society. Further, patriarchy has located women somewhere between men and nature in a conceptual hierarchy, accentuating the 'similar logic of domination between the destruction of non-human nature and the oppression of women' (Eckersley 1992:64).

However, the gender differences that are disclosed in empirical research are not always 'in favour' of women (cf. Davidson & Freudenburg 1996). For example, Scott and Willits (1994) found that environmental action, like joining organizations and attending meetings, was a predominantly male domain. On the other hand, women were found to be more inclined toward environmentally protective consumer behaviour. They discovered no consistent variations according to gender in attitudes toward the environment and the general role of humans in nature. Stern et al. (1993) and Flynn et al. (1994) found that perception of environmental dangers was generally stronger among women. Stern and associates also probed for gender differences in environmental action or willingness to pay for improved environmental conditions, but found none. A Norwegian study found greater class differences in environmental orientation among young girls than among young boys, but the girls were more concerned about the environment in all classes (Skogen 1996). All in all, women's stronger concern in some areas seems well established. We should expect an influence of gender not only on environmental orientation itself, but also on the relationship between environmental orientation and culture patterns. Several studies have concluded that young women have been on the move to the left on many political issues throughout Scandinavia and the USA during the last decades (Norris 1988; Oskarsson 1995). This possibly reflects the educational and economic achievements made by women in this period, coupled with a sense of solidarity (akin to caring) which could be more characteristic of women than of men.

The urban-rural axis is also thought to influence environmental attitudes. But if this idea is treated as a fact in the public discourse, research has not shed much light on the relationship. Whereas conflicts over large carnivores that kill livestock, forestry practices, whaling, etc. obviously have an urban-rural dimension, the operative mechanisms have not been satisfactorily identified. It seems reasonable to anticipate that various environmental issues, affecting urban and rural people in different ways, will be differently influenced by the relationship – particularly what is perceived as relations of power – between urban and rural areas (cf. Dunk 1994). Youth cultural patterns are also held to be influenced by an urban-rural dimension, and this perspective has been central in some recent qualitative studies (Eidheim 1993; Jørgensen 1994). However, the urban-rural differences are not unequivocally corroborated by surveys, which have indicated relatively minor differences in leisure patterns (Skogen 1998). Further probing into the complex matter of urbanization, culture patterns and environmental orientation is therefore needed, and some initial attempts will be made here.

2. Research questions

Earlier studies have often focused on the relationship between environmental orientation and background factors like gender, class and education. There is a need to move on from such crudely defined variables to culture profiles appearing in empirical research. The survey at hand was designed to tap cultural differentiation among youth (aged 15–22) to enable us to probe the relationship between environmental orientation and a broader cultural orientation. It is also possible to investigate the influence of the background factors gender, class and degree of urbanization, both as to their 'direct' effects on environmental orientation and their possible influence through the broader culture profiles – which in turn are hypothesized to be tied to such background factors. In this manner, we can test the initial hypothesis that aspects of environmental orientation are differently tied to larger cultural packages, and that a pragmatic environmental perspective should be less culturally distinct than environmental concern implying a critical stance toward industrialism.

Concern for human well-being and health risks is operationalized through anxiety regarding the harmful effects of pollution. Such

concern could be taken to reflect a pragmatic perspective insofar as it is not tied to other and more fundamentally critical attitudes. Endorsement of a critical perspective is operationalized through the so-called 'New Ecological Paradigm' scale (measuring aspects of the respondents' views on human relations to nature) and attitudes towards economic growth.

The culture patterns are sought through the respondents' evaluation of a number of well-known categories of youth, labelled in such a way as to appear culturally clear-cut. Since some culture patterns among youth are clearly influenced by class background as well as gender (cf. Skogen 1998), and possibly by degree of urbanization, we must also investigate the relationship between culture profiles and these background factors.

The class model that is utilized includes a distinction between two fractions within the middle class. Gouldner (1979) saw the 'humanistic intellectuals' as one of two elites within the same class (the 'new class' or 'new middle class'). The other elite was termed 'technical intelligentsia', and was described as firmly situated within the production process or economic sectors close to it. In this paper, these fractions are labelled 'humanistic/social intermediate strata' (HSIS) and 'technical/economic intermediate strata' (TEIS), thereby bypassing some of the difficulties connected to the notion of elites as well as to the term 'new class'. Important cultural differences between these two fractions, and not least differences in environmental orientation, have been established in earlier research (Skogen 1996, 1998).

3. Method

This paper is based on data from the 1994 wave of the 'Young in Norway' panel study. The study started in 1992 when a nationally representative sample ($n = 12,287$) of Norwegian lower and upper secondary school students (ages 13 to 20) was drawn using schools as units. The sample was drawn from areas that were stratified according to region and school size. The questionnaires were completed in school. In Norway, 98.5 per cent of the age cohort from 13 to 16 attend the compulsory lower secondary school; 90 per cent of the 16-year-olds were in the first year of the upper secondary school in October 1992. At the same time 77 per cent of the 18-year-olds were in school, the decrease being due to dropouts and courses that take less than three years to complete. The response rate in 1992 was 97.0 per cent.

In the 1994 follow-up, when the respondents were aged 15 to 22, the sample was reduced to 9,680 through the exclusion of four schools. This did not influence the national representativity of the sample. The response rate was 80.1 per cent ($n = 7,751$). In 1994 about half the students had left the school they attended in 1992, and therefore received the questionnaire by mail. In this group the response rate was 67.9 per cent. Those who were still in the same school completed their questionnaires during school hours, and the response rate was 91.8 per cent. The attrition was of course not arbitrary. Knowing all respondents in 1992, when the response rate was extremely high, we can roughly sketch out a typical non-respondent as a boy of working-class background attending vocational courses in 1992, with grades below average, seeing himself as a worker at age 40, and who would rather quit school if a job could be found. Such attrition influences results, not least concerning issues that are tied to social class and class culture, where effects could possibly be diminished. However, the total response rate, even that in the postal survey, is satisfactory compared to what is usually obtained.

The broad range of the research project necessitated a design where many questions were only administered to half of the subjects (every second student in every class in 1992). This was the case with several questions that are central to this analysis, and it is therefore based on half the sample ($n = 3,810$).

4. Measures

Attitudes toward youth groups: culture profiles

The respondents were presented with a list of 20 youth groups, each of which was assigned a rather cliché label, and asked to rate each on a scale from 1 to 10 points, depending on how well they liked the group. The purpose was to lure the respondents into positioning themselves in a youth cultural landscape, something which is often difficult if young people are asked outright to do so. The youth groups are listed in Table 1.

'Goals for the nation'

The respondents were asked to rate 16 possible political goals for the nation from 1 to 10 points,

depending on the importance they assigned to each of them. Two are included in the present analysis, namely 'protect the environment against pollution' and 'ensure continued economic growth'. The first of these is not very controversial today, and may serve as a crude indicator of environmental concern based on risk perception. The second goal relates to the schism between 'deep' and 'shallow' ecology, and a critical stance toward economic growth is hypothesized to be part of a politically radical attitude package.

The New Ecological Paradigm (NEP)

The New Ecological Paradigm scale is an instrument designed to tap the endorsement of an essentially 'ecocentric' worldview (Dunlap & Van Liere 1978; Dunlap et al. 1992). Dunlap and associates claimed that endorsement of an ecocentric paradigm could be interpreted as a sign of departure from ways of thinking that have been central to industrial capitalism. Whether high scores on a survey instrument could really be taken to indicate a shift in core attitudes in western societies is at best uncertain. It is, for instance, possible that the highest scores on such an instrument are tied to particular cultural and political patterns. Whether the existence of such patterns heralds a more widespread change in beliefs and values is also uncertain. There seems to be little empirical support for the view that critical perspectives on industrial capitalism are gaining hold within the general population.

As the NEP instrument seems to capture some central elements of attitude patterns concerning human relations to nature, and has been used in other studies (e.g. Gooch 1995; Scott & Willits 1994), we decided to employ it here. Bypassing the discussion of a general attitude change, however, we have chosen to regard it as a measure of critical environmental orientation, and not a new paradigm – although the label 'NEP' is kept for convenience.

The original instrument consists of 15 statements (Dunlap et al. 1992). We were compelled to compress the instrument due to limited space in the questionnaire, and selected eight of the items, four expressing optimistic views and four expressing pessimistic views or troubled concern:

- *The balance of nature is very delicate and easily upset.*
- *Humans have the right to modify the natural environment to suit their needs.*
- *Humans are severely abusing the environment.*
- *The so-called 'ecological crisis' facing humankind has been greatly exaggerated.*
- *Plants and animals have as much right as humans to exist.*
- *The balance of nature is strong enough to cope with the impact of modern industrial nations.*
- *If things continue on their present course, we will soon experience a major ecological catastrophe.*
- *Human ingenuity will ensure that we do not make the earth unliveable.*

There has been some discussion as to whether the NEP scale covers one or more dimensions of environmental concern. In line with the argument of Dunlap and associates (1992), we have considered it as one. The statements touch upon very closely related themes, and it is hard to see why they should relate to different attitude patterns. This is possibly even more so with the compressed eight-item version than the full size instrument. The eight items had good internal reliability (Alpha = .72). On this basis a sum score variable (mean score on the eight items) was constructed, and then employed as an index intended to measure critical environmental orientation.

Membership in environmental organizations

The respondents were asked to report whether they were, or had been, members of an environmental organization. Those who were members in 1994 as well as those who had been members at some earlier point were treated as 'members' in the analysis, on the assumption that both groups identify comparatively strongly with the environmental movement, and that resigning membership in this age group is more often due to economic reasons, moving, and so on, than to actual change of attitude toward environmentalism.

Class

The class variable was constructed by categorizing parents' occupations according to ISCO 88 (ILO 1990; Hoffmann 1993). Father's occupation was primarily used as a basis for classification, but where this information was lacking, mother's occupation was used instead. Occupations were grouped into the following six categories: professional leaders, technical/economic intermediate strata (TEIS), humanistic/social intermediate strata (HSIS), clerical work-

ers, farmers and fishermen, and manual workers. Examples of occupations placed in the TEIS category are engineers, economists and researchers in technology, whereas occupations like physicians, teachers, social workers and artists were sorted into the HSIS category.

Using only one indicator to determine class locations is always problematic. But class analysis in empirical research is as much a question of what is practically feasible as of what theoretical model one wishes to employ. Fortunately, the 'good enough' class models usually generate results very similar to those obtained by more sophisticated measures (Crompton 1993). However, any single measure of class position should be expected to underplay actual class differences (Davies 1994).

Urbanization

Degree of urbanization was scored on a five-point scale ranging from 'small village or countryside' (coded 1) to 'city' (coded 5).

5. Results

Culture profiles

Factor analysis was performed on the items in the instrument measuring opinions of youth groups. Oblique rotation (Kaiser's normalization, eigenvalue >1) was chosen because of the obvious possibility that there might be correlation between factors (however, orthogonal rotation yielded an identical factor solution). Four factors emerged, as we can see from Table 1 – where the mean score for each item is also reported. The factor scores were retained as variables.

The first factor is characterized by high esteem of youth groups belonging to traditional,

Table 1. *Culture profiles, factor analysis.*

	Traditional humanism	Conventional	Radical counterculture	Redneck	Mean score	SD
Scouts	**.75**	.03	−.09	.07	5.8	2.6
Members of Christian associations	**.76**	**−.02**	−.02	−.04	4.5	2.8
Young people who like country music	**.60**	.02	.06	.39	4.3	2.7
Young people working for the use of dialects and 'nynorsk'	**.59**	**−.07**	.15	.11	3.7	2.7
Young people supporting Amnesty International	**.45**	.11	.25	−.24	7.1	2.6
Disco youth	−.25	**.81**	.12	.07	6.1	2.6
Young people who buy fashion clothes	−.10	**.70**	.07	.06	5.5	2.4
Those who go to youth clubs	.15	**.60**	.01	−.01	6.6	2.1
Young people in sports clubs	.26	**.56**	−.27	−19	7.6	2.3
Young people participating in beauty contests	−.03	**.50**	.04	.36	4.6	2.7
Those who work hard to get good grades	.35	**.44**	−.19	−.07	7.4	2.3
Young people from 'Blitz' (militant anarchists)	**−.07**	**.01**	**.84**	**.01**	3.5	2.7
Squatters	**−.10**	**−.02**	**.81**	.14	3.3	2.6
Draft objectors	**.05**	**−.05**	**.68**	.05	4.4	2.9
Gay youth	**.18**	**−.05**	**.60**	−12	3.5	2.9
Immigrant youth	**.38**	.12	**.40**	−.35	4.9	2.6
Young people who support environmental organizations	.33	.20	**.34**	−.22	6.2	2.8
Young people who are interested in weapons	**.14**	**−.07**	.03	**.72**	3.9	2.8
Motor youth	**.19**	**.16**	.06	**.66**	5.5	2.7
Young people who fight immigration	−.14	.11	−.15	**.47**	3.8	3.2
Eigenvalue	4.3	2.7	1.6	1.4		
Explained variance	21.3	13.4	8.1	6.9		

value-based organizations: scouts, members of Christian associations, those who advocate the use of local dialects and those who support Amnesty International. We should note that environmentalist youth[1] also load highly on this factor, although slightly higher on the third one. The profile that thus emerges indicates identification with what we might call *traditional humanism*. The second factor presented the highest loadings in connection with the rating of youth groups that could possibly best be labelled *conventional*: 'Disco youth', those who go to youth clubs, those who strive for achievement in sports and in school, and even those who participate in beauty contests. The third factor clearly points to a politically radical profile. Here we find high opinions of militant anarchists,[2] squatters, those who refuse military service, gay youth, immigrant youth and young environmentalists. This factor is labelled *radical counterculture*. The fourth factor is in a sense the extreme opposite of the third. It comprises the highest ratings of youth who are interested in weapons, cars and MCs and youth who fight immigration. It also includes particularly low ratings of immigrant youth, and the second highest factor loadings on those who take part in beauty contests and those who like country music. This factor is, a little ironically, labelled *redneck*.[3]

Culture profiles, class and gender

Earlier research (cf. Skogen 1998) suggests a relationship between class as well as gender and at least some of the culture profiles, whereas the status of urbanization is less clear. These background variables will be investigated as regards their influence on environmental orientation along with the culture profiles. As a first step, linear regression was therefore performed to disclose the relationship between the background variables and the culture profiles. Urbanization was treated as an ordinal variable, as degree of urbanization may be considered to be increasing gradually. This is more problematic regarding class, however, and therefore dummy variables were constructed (Table 2).

The traditional humanism profile clearly had the strongest position among girls, and leaned slightly toward the rural. There were also some modest class effects, as youth with a HSIS, TEIS or farming/fishing background were more inclined toward this profile compared to those with a manual working-class background. The profile seems to encompass values that are more typical of women than of men, and seems to have a basis in a rural traditions of participating in organizations as well as in some core middle-class values. The inclusion of those who like country music does indeed point to a culture profile distant from the urban *avant garde*.

The conventional profile was also more predominant among girls. Some modest effects of urbanization and class were found as well. Living in rural areas and having a HSIS or farming/fishing background decreased the likelihood of identifying with this profile. Youth, and boys in particular, with a class background that in a sense ties them to core processes in capitalism did indeed endorse this profile somewhat more than others. Being critical of the values comprised in it was most typical of the HSIS and farming/fishing youth. As with the traditional humanism profile, there seem to be some ties between culture elements prevalent in these two groups: in this case disregard for certain forms of competitiveness, as well as commercial and sexist pastimes (beauty contests).

Girls were much more positive than boys toward the radical counterculture profile. Urbanization once again played a modest role (tending toward the urban), whereas some quite substantial class effects were found. Having a HSIS background increased the likelihood of endorsing the profile, as did – to a lesser degree – having parents who belonged to the TEIS. This points in the same direction as earlier research on new social movement support, where a primary base in 'the new middle class' has generally been found. A high factor score on the radical counterculture profile most likely indicates a cultural orientation similar to that found in the typical new social movement constituency.

The redneck profile was almost the exact opposite of the radical counterculture regarding gender, urbanization and class. There was a strong effect of being a boy. This is not surprising, given the obvious macho quality of some of the items that dominate the factor score. The profile was also more strongly tied to the urbanization variable than the others, being most typical of rural areas. There were negative effects of all class backgrounds except farming/fishing compared to the manual working class; strongest having a HSIS background and barely significant having parents who were clerical workers. This is supportive of earlier research, which indicates that working-class youth culture (and the culture of youth with a farming/

Table 2. *Culture profiles, linear regression with gender, urbanization and class.*

	Traditional humanism			Conventional		
	B	SE B	Beta	B	SE B	Beta
Gender (Boys = 1, Girls = 0)	−.31	.03	−.16***	−.34	.05	−.17***
Urbanization	−.04	.02	−.05**	−.06	.02	−.06***
Class (reference category: manual workers)						
Professional leaders	.05	.05	.02 ns	.01	.05	−.02 ns
TEIS	.13	.05	.05**	−.04	.05	−.02 ns
HSIS	.15	05	.05**	−.21	.05	−.07***
Clerical workers	−.07	.06	−.02 ns	−.07	.06	−.02 ns
Farmers/fishermen	.25	.06	.06***	−.16	.07	−.04*
		R^2 = .03			R^2 = .04	
	Radical counterculture			Redneck		
	B	SE B	Beta	B	SE B	Beta
Gender (Boys = 1, Girls = 0)	−.40	.03	−.20***	.62	.03	.30***
Urbanization	.05	.02	.05**	−.13	.02	−.13***
Class (reference category: manual workers)						
Professional leaders	.06	.05	.02 ns	−.15	.05	−.06**
TEIS	.18	.04	.07***	−.23	.04	−.10***
HSIS	.48	.05	.17***	−.40	.05	−.14***
Clerical workers	−.11	.06	−.03 ns	−.13	.06	−.04*
Farmers/fishermen	.11	.07	.03 ns	.07	.07	.02 ns
		R^2 = .08			R^2 = .14	

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

fishing background) holds physical masculine toughness and its symbolic expressions (in this case cars, MCs, weapons) in high esteem (Jørgensen 1994; Skogen 1998). Skepticism toward immigrants or outright racism has also been found to be most predominant in working-class youth, and particularly in boys (Pedersen 1996).

Culture profiles and environmental orientation

Linear regression was performed to disclose the associations between the environmental orientation variables, the background factors gender, urbanization and class, and the four culture profile factor scores. The variables were introduced in two blocks in order to determine the additional effect of the culture profiles compared to the background factors.

The mean score on the *fighting pollution* variable was 8.6 on the scale from 1 to 10 (SD = 1.8), indicating a widespread concern. As we can see from Table 3, gender was the only background variable that influenced the rating (the first block, without the culture profiles): girls thought this more important than did boys. Entering the culture profiles into the model demonstrated significant effects of all of them, and yielded a significant increase in explained variance (R^2 change: $p < .0001$). The importance assigned to protecting the environment against pollution was positively associated with the scores on the traditional humanism profile and the conventional profile, as well as, to a somewhat lesser degree, the radical counterculture profile. It was negatively associated with the redneck profile. Entering the second block also brought out a significant positive (although modest) effect of increasing degree of urbanization. This is probably due to the urban-rural distribution of the culture profiles. For example, the strongly 'anti-pollution' traditional humanism profile is more predominant in rural areas. When 'cleaned' of this effect, a general, but very modest tendency toward less concern for pollution in rural areas is disclosed.

The *NEP sum score* had a mean of 3.9 on the scale from 1 to 5 (SD = .6), indicating a predominant positive evaluation of the environmentally benign dimension comprised in it. The score was related to gender (girls scored higher than boys) and class (Table 4). There

Table 3. *Fighting pollution, linear regression with background factors and culture profiles.*

	Block 1			Block 2		
	B	SE B	Beta	B	SE B	Beta
Gender (Boys = 1, Girls = 0)	−.64	.06	−.17***	−.13	.06	−.03*
Urbanization	.03	.02	.03 ns	.07	.02	.05**
Class (reference category: manual workers)						
Professional leaders	.02	.10	.01 ns	−.06	.09	−.01 ns
TEIS	.08	.09	.02 ns	−.05	.08	−.01 ns
HSIS	.12	.10	.02 ns	−.10	.09	−.02 ns
Clerical workers	.01	.11	.00 ns	.04	.10	.01 ns
Farmers/fishermen	−.05	.13	−.01 ns	−.11	.12	−.01 ns
		$R^2 = .03$				
Traditional humanism				.35	.03	.19***
Conventional				.34	.03	.18***
Radical counterculture				.22	.03	.12***
Redneck				−.34	.03	−.19***
					$R^2 = .16$	

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

were positive effects of belonging to both middle-class groups, although strongest with a HSIS background. Introducing the culture profiles considerably weakened the effect of gender. The effect of a HSIS background was also weakened, and the effect of a TEIS background disappeared. All culture profiles displayed significant effects and contributed to a significant increase in the explained variance (R^2 change: $p < .0001$). The positive effect of a high score on the radical counterculture profile was strongest, followed by the positive effect of scoring high on the traditional humanism profile, and the negative effect of scoring high on the redneck profile. There was, finally, a modest negative effect of the conventional profile. In block 2, the original effects of class were channelled through the culture profiles, which were themselves tied to class background (as we saw in Table 2).

Table 4. *NEP endorsement, linear regression with background factors and culture profiles.*

	Block 1			Block 2		
	B	SE B	Beta	B	SE B	Beta
Gender (Boys = 1, Girls = 0)	−.21	.02	−.18***	−.08	.02	−.07***
Urbanization	−.01	.01	−.01 ns	−.01	.01	−.02 ns
Class (reference category: manual workers)						
Professional leaders	.05	.03	.03 ns	.03	.03	.02 ns
TEIS	.06	.03	.03 ns	.01	.03	.01 ns
HSIS	.18	.03	.11***	.07	.03	.04*
Clerical workers	−.03	.04	−.02 ns	−.02	.03	−.01 ns
Farmers/fishermen	.11	.04	.04*	.06	.04	.03 ns
		$R^2 = .05$				
Traditional humanism				.09	.01	.16***
Conventional				−.03	.01	−.05*
Radical counterculture				.13	.01	.22***
Redneck				−.09	.01	−.15***
					$R^2 = .15$	

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

Table 5. *Economic growth, linear regression with background factors and culture profiles.*

	Block 1			Block 2		
	B	SE B	Beta	B	SE B	Beta
Gender (Boys = 1, Girls = 0)	.66	.08	.15***	.66	.08	.15***
Urbanization	−.01	.03	−.01 ns	−.06	.03	−.03 ns[a]
Class (reference category: manual workers)						
Professional leaders	.24	.12	.04 ns[b]	.26	.12[c]	.04*
TEIS	.01	.11	.01 ns	.09	.10	.02 ns
HSIS	−.55	.12	−.09***	−.27	.12	−.04*
Clerical workers	−.11	.14	−.01 ns	−.08	.13	−.01 ns
Farmers/fishermen	−.26	.17	−.03 ns	−.18	.16	−.02 ns
		$R^2 = .03$				
Traditional humanism				.12	.04	.05**
Conventional				.52	.04	.23***
Radical counterculture				−.25	.04	−.11***
Redneck				.18	.04	.08***
					$R^2 = .11$	

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.
[a] $p = .052$.
[b] $p = .051$.
[c] The standard error dropped from .122 to .117 when introducing the second block, giving $p = .027$.

Table 6. *Membership in environmental organizations, logistic regression with background factors, environmental orientation and culture profiles.*

	Block 1				Block 2			
	B	SE B	Wald	OR	B	SE B	Wald	OR
Gender (Boys = 1, Girls = 0)	−.04	.15	.07	.96 ns	.10	.16	.42	1.11 ns
Urbanization	−.07	.05	1.95	.93 ns	−.03	.06	.20	.98 ns
Class (reference category: manual workers)								
Professional leaders	.42	.24	3.02	1.52 ns	.35	.25	2.05	1.42 ns
TEIS	.56	.21	7.26	1.76**	.48	.21	5.01	1.61*
HSIS	.69	.22	10.19	1.99**	.49	.22	4.82	1.63*
Clerical workers	.12	.30	.15	1.12 ns	.14	.31	.22	1.15 ns
Farmers/fishermen	−.01	.37	.01	.99 ns	−.07	.37	.04	.93 ns
Fighting pollution	.13	.06	5.44	1.14*	.13	.06	4.58	1.13*
NEP endorsement	.60	.14	16.7	1.82***	.33	.15	4.54	1.39* ;
Economic growth	−.22	.03	50.56	.80***	−.17	.03	27.00	.85***
Traditional humanism					.07	.08	.73	1.07 ns
Conventional					−.22	.08	7.69	.80**
Radical counterculture					.38	.07	28.74	1.46***
Redneck					−.18	.09	4.48	.84*

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

Economic growth had a mean score of 6.1 on the scale from 1 to 10 (SD = 1.8), considerably lower than fighting pollution. The importance assigned to this goal was related to gender (boys more positive than girls) and class (negative effect of a HSIS background), before entering the culture profiles. Introducing them yielded significant effects of all. The strongest effect was the positive one of scoring high on the conventional profile. Viewing economic growth as important was negatively related to the score on radical counterculture. There were more modest positive associations with scores on the traditional humanism and redneck profiles. The effect of gender remained undiminished, but the class effects followed different paths in the second block. The positive effect of having professional leader parents became significant at the .05 level when controlling for the culture profiles, but this was due only to a slight drop in the standard error (see note in Table 5). The effect of a HSIS background was weakened, and seems to be partly channelled through the radical counterculture profile.

The direct effects of class on environmental orientation paralleled the differences between vocationally trained working-class youth and academically trained HSIS youth, effects which have been demonstrated through earlier research (Skogen 1996). As we have seen, these effects were modest where they appeared, and tended to weaken or vanish when the culture profiles were introduced.

If we start with the radical counterculture profile, one possible interpretation is that those who identify strongly with it (and thus typically harbour a critical environmental orientation) are most frequently located within the HSIS, but are not so numerous as to effect any major influence on the direct relationship between class and environmental orientation (which is there, but not strong). Conversely, the moderate effects on environmental orientation of a manual class background, despite the high redneck scores among working-class and farming/fishing youth, could be due to a relatively modest number of 'hard-core rednecks' even among those with such a class background. This interpretation is to some degree substantiated by the distribution within the class model of the respondents who score highest on these two culture profiles. Respondents within the quartile with highest scores on the radical counterculture profile comprised 40 per cent within the HSIS, which is almost 12 per cent more than within the TEIS, the category with the second highest proportion of such 'counterculturists'. If we move on to those 10 per cent with the ultimate high scores, we find that this counterculture elite makes up 19 per cent of the HSIS. This is almost double the proportion within the TEIS, but probably still not enough to enact any major influence upon the relationship between class and environmental orientation.

Similarly, if we look at the redneck profile, we find that the respondents falling within the highest scoring quartile make up over 30 per cent within the manual working class as well as within the farming/fishing category. This is 8 per cent more than within the category with the second strongest redneck affinity, the professional leaders. The hard-core top 10 per cent of the sample make up 14–15 per cent of the manual working class and farming/fishing category. This is close to double the proportion within the professional leaders category, but apparently not enough to influence the statistical relationship between class and environmental orientation in any substantial way. All in all, it seems reasonable to assume an impact of class, but one that is mainly working through the culture profiles, particularly radical counterculture and redneck.

Membership in environmental organizations in relation to environmental orientation and culture profiles

In all, 8.0 per cent of the girls and 5.6 per cent of the boys were members of an environmental organization or had been previously. Logistic regression was performed in two blocks. The first block contained the background variables and the environmental orientation variables. The second block also included the culture profile variables. The intention was to investigate the effects of the culture profiles on the propensity to join environmental organizations as compared to the effects of the background variables and the different aspects of environmental orientation.

The first block demonstrated that the chance of belonging to an organization (now or recently) was significantly greater for those of HSIS or TEIS backgrounds (Table 6). It decreased with the score on the economic growth variable (the Wald indicating that this was the strongest effect in block 1), and increased with the scores on the NEP scale and the pollution prevention variable (the latter being the weakest of the environmental orientation effects). Introducing the culture profiles in block 2 demonstrated that scores on all profiles

except traditional humanism significantly influenced the probability of belonging to an environmental organization. An inspection of the Wald values shows that high scores on the radical counterculture profile and negative attitudes to economic growth had the strongest effects, although the impact of the attitude to economic growth was weakened compared to block 1. The NEP score also lost much of its impact through the introduction of the culture profiles. These effects now seem to be partly funnelled through the radical counterculture variable. There were significant negative effects of the conventional and redneck profiles, and these probably also sucked up some of the effects of economic growth attitude and NEP score. The class effects were somewhat smaller when controlled for the culture profiles, but they remained significant. There was no effect of gender, nor of urbanization, when the other variables were controlled for.

6. Discussion

The findings go some way toward supporting the initial hypothesis: environmental awareness that can be tied to worries concerning individual risk (a pragmatic perspective) is indeed less culturally specific than awareness that is part of a comprehensive critical perspective. The latter is quite closely connected to a culture profile that may be discerned through a positive evaluation of youth groups that in various ways are tied to a politically radical ideology, and could be taken to comprise a critical stance toward many sides of contemporary society. A critical attitude toward economic growth, coupled with endorsement of NEP, is thus part of a rather specific cultural package, with a class basis reminiscent of that which many studies have found regarding the core of the environmental movement. This is not the case with the desire to curb pollution, which is in fact less strongly tied to the radical counterculture profile than to the conventional and traditional humanist profiles. This issue is now probably rather uncontroversial, and as much a source of worry to the conventional respondents (who give a high priority to economic growth) as to the radicals (who do not). Treating this statement as indicative of a pragmatic orientation is also supported by its high mean score, indicating broad support. The redneck profile is the only one that is negatively associated also with the pollution variable. The redneck and radical counterculture profiles constitute the extremes regarding environmental orientation. The redneck profile is consistently negatively related to the 'environment friendly' attitudes, whereas the radical counterculture profile is the only one that is consistently positively related to them.

The relationship between culture profiles and environmental orientation variables is such that a funnel is formed, leading from a very broad and general positive correlation between desire to combat pollution and no less than three of the culture profiles, to the exclusive relationship between the radical counterculture profile and negative attitudes toward economic growth. This could be seen as a movement from a pragmatic to a critical ecological paradigm, and at the same time a movement toward a higher cultural specificity.

The radical counterculture and redneck profiles are quite distinctly tied to class background. Thus, reproduction of class cultural patterns across generations seems apparent as the respondents are classified according to their parents' occupations. We should understand such continuity partly against a background of internalization of the parent culture in childhood, and partly as the outcome of dynamic cultural response to conditions that resemble those faced by the parental generation, and which therefore generate similar cultural forms (for a more thorough discussion, see Skogen 1998).

Among our variables, the NEP scale is not the one that distinguishes most clearly among the culture profiles. It is quite strongly tied to the radical counterculture profile, but also to the traditional humanism profile. The negative evaluation of economic growth, however, is exclusively tied to the radical counterculture profile, and thus seems to be the most culturally, or ideologically, narrow. This indicates that the NEP scale does not necessarily point to a 'critical paradigm' in any strict sense, as it is entirely possible to endorse both NEP and economic growth – as those who score high on traditional humanism typically do. It therefore casts some doubt on the capability of the NEP scale to measure adequately an ecocentric orientation as opposed to an anthropocentric one.

We now turn to the two culture profiles that are less clearly tied to environmental orientation and class. The conventional profile includes positive attitudes toward competitiveness (in education and sports), focus on beauty and fashion, as well as pleasure-seeking (commercial) pastimes. The acceptance of competi-

tiveness points in the direction of individualist attitudes, but we should not over-emphasize this. The higher scores among girls, along with the higher factor loadings on items concerning fashion and beauty, indicate that what we are facing here is chiefly an orientation toward some core values in modern society, and a corresponding rejection of departures from the mainstream route leading to a form of happiness and success that some would regard as superficial. It may appear odd that this profile is so weakly tied to class, and perhaps particularly that there seems to be as much endorsement of such a school-oriented profile within the working class as elsewhere. However, while some studies have concluded that working-class youth are often adverse to competitiveness in school, others have pointed to the diversity of responses to school among working-class youngsters, and that a pragmatic acceptance of education as a necessary evil is perhaps the most common (cf. Brown 1987). The only category standing out in relation to the conventional profile is the HSIS, which is in accordance with a generally critical attitude found here, mirrored in the endorsement of the radical counterculture profile. It seems reasonable that the pragmatic individual-risk-perception perspective (expressed through worries concerning pollution, a threat to individual health and happiness) is in accordance with the conventional profile. It is also more predominant among girls, who are more prone to worry about environmental safety (cf. Flynn et al. 1994; Stern et al. 1993). Actually, those who subscribe to conventional values are more concerned with pollution than those who identify with radical counterculture. On the other hand, controversial and critical environmental attitudes are less agreeable to those with a strong conventional orientation.

A central element in the traditional humanism profile is the positive attitude toward members of traditional youth organizations (scouts, Christian youth, and those engaged on the 'rural side' in the peculiar Norwegian language dispute), as well as some more modern ones, namely Amnesty International and indeed environmental youth organizations. This seems to indicate adherence to values that are central to major traditional organizations, and which could be construed as, among other things, a sort of responsible concern, that is, concern without desire for revolt against existing political structures. The traditional humanism profile is tied to our environmental orientation variables in ways that indicate precisely such a responsible, within-system concern. Perhaps we could even chance labelling it an anthropocentric pro-environmental orientation. For although the traditional humanists actually endorse the NEP, they are not adverse to economic growth. And this could arguably be seen as a 'litmus test' of a critical environmental orientation (Eckersley 1992).

In Norway, one environmental organization is totally dominant in the age group at hand, namely 'Natur og ungdom' (Nature and Youth), the youth organization of 'Norges Naturvernforbund' (The Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature). It is more radical than its parent organization, and generally emphasizes the political context in which environmental issues should be seen. Membership in an environmental organization is therefore probably an even stronger indicator of endorsement of a critical ecological paradigm than that expressed by a critical attitude toward economic growth. Membership seems determined by identification with the radical counterculture profile more than by any of the measures of environmental orientation. Among the latter, a critical attitude toward economic growth is clearly the strongest predictor. As we have seen, this environmental orientation measure was itself most exclusively tied to the radical counterculture profile.

In the remaining discussion we shall concentrate on those two culture profiles that form the most distinct patterns in relation to environmental orientation and class, namely the radical counterculture profile with its HSIS affiliation, and the redneck profile with its basis in the manual classes. These patterns signify a class-related cultural polarization, the analysis of which could help us comprehend some central cultural mechanisms in operation here.

The HSIS domination within the environmental movement has long been a central focus in analyses of the societal dynamics involved in its formation. For example, Cotgrove and Duff (1980) point to the alienation experienced by groups in the non-productive sector of industrial capitalist societies. In the eyes of these middle-class fractions, the destruction of nature is but one of the undesirable consequences of an unjust economic and social system (cf. Scott 1990). However, involvement in the environmental movement clearly cannot presuppose subjective recognition of class interests in a socio-economic sense. Earlier research has indicated that ties to two basic culture patterns

influence the environmental orientation of Norwegian youth (Skogen 1996). The 'abstraction-oriented culture' and the 'production-oriented culture' were seen as originating from different class bases. The particular affinity toward the environmental movement found among HSIS youth was interpreted in light of this class fraction's cultural roots in the abstraction-oriented culture (which they largely share with the upper class and TEIS), and their perceived independence from material production and the marketplace. The same perspective would seem to cover the affinity toward a critical ecological paradigm which was uncovered in the present study.

Abstraction and the related process of aesthetization relate to concepts of nature in important ways. The abstraction-oriented culture provides a disposition toward aesthetic evaluation of nature, as well as identification with abstract totalities (all living things, our planet, mother earth, etc.). Rejection of crude materialism, conceived as the cause behind destructive exploitation of nature, also fits the picture. According to Bourdieu, the aesthetization typical of the dominant classes fills its cultural 'function' partly through a demonstration of distance from 'the natural and social world' (Bourdieu 1984:5), i.e. in this case from the necessity of actually manipulating nature.

Youth of working-class background were influenced by a different cultural location, in that they were rooted in a production-oriented culture and culturally linked to material production and thereby to the core economic processes in capitalism (Skogen 1996). The strongly male-dominated redneck profile identified here, with its basis among working class and farming/fishing youth, appears to signify a cultural foundation for a negative attitude toward environmentalism. This profile is reminiscent of core elements in the production-oriented culture, as these have been described in many ethnographic studies of working-class youth (cf. Dunk 1991; Jørgensen 1994; Weis 1990), as well as in some surveys (cf. Skogen 1998). The profile's class basis itself further accentuates this link.

The stronger environmental concern found among girls does indicate that gender is an operative factor, perhaps along the lines suggested by Stern and associates (1993) and Flynn and associates (1994), as well as Davidson and Freudenburg (1996): women are more aware of environmental risks, and this could again be connected to a caring attitude central to the female gender role. Gilligan (1982) maintains that women are oriented toward interpersonal relationships, which results in the development of a characteristic female 'ethics of caring'. It also points in the same direction as studies of voting behaviour and political orientation, which conclude that young women have become more radical than young men, not least concerning issues like nuclear power and environmental safety (cf. Norris 1988). However, regarding organization membership, there is no remaining effect of gender when controlling for the environmental orientation variables. This is explained by the fact that girls score higher than boys do on these variables, so that their actually higher propensity to join environmental organizations is explained by their stronger endorsement of such environmental attitudes that predict membership. There is no additional effect of gender when this is taken into account. Further, the girls' higher scores on the 'conventional' profile, with its elements of competition and individual achievement, and certainly its positive correlation with the 'economic growth' variable, modifies the picture of radical girls. This could point to a more marked diversity among girls than among boys, and is corroborated by the larger class differences among girls regarding environmental orientation that were established in an earlier study (Skogen 1996).

There are some modest effects of urbanization working through the culture profiles. Only the redneck profile is distinctly influenced by the urban-rural dimension. The particular role of such a culture profile in some environmental disputes is interesting, and should be pursued in qualitative research. Still, the main impression is that the effects of urbanization are not very important, even regarding membership in environmental organizations,[4] which may seem surprising. This indicates that environmental attitudes measured on a general level are not strongly affected by urban-rural polarization. Whether this is a new development – which one might think considering the widely held opinion that modern environmentalism is an urban phenomenon – is impossible to tell from the data at hand. However, it is possible that some earlier accounts of urban-rural conflicts over environmental matters have forgotten the issue of class and class cultures, which seems to cut across the urban-rural dimension, whereas some groups with strong opinions on certain issues – say, the protection

of large carnivores and old-growth forests or the ban on whaling – such as farmers, fishermen and the rural working class, are of course chiefly found in rural areas. Those groups that support environmentalism in the cities are likely to do so also in rural areas, only they may not be so numerous there. There is clearly a need for more research addressing the urban-rural dimension explicitly.

This study has demonstrated that young people's environmental orientation is heterogeneous and tied in multiple ways to broader cultural patterns. It is not surprising that environmental orientation is comprised in packages of attitudes and beliefs, but this fact is often ignored by government agencies and environmental organizations in their attempts to communicate with the public. The diversity has also been inadequately covered in research, and even the present study, with its crude survey measures, leaves much to be desired. Further probing into cultural interpretations of environmental issues will require qualitative studies where we can really get at meanings and their contexts.

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Notes

[1] Including young environmentalists in the instrument may seem problematic when the intention is to investigate relationships between the ensuing factors and environmental orientation. However, removing the category does not influence the factor structure or the relationship between factors and other variables, and it may therefore be kept in the analysis.

[2] Youth from 'Blitz', a fairly large, loosely organized group in Oslo that is well known nationally because of its militant actions.

[3] 'Redneck' is an American term, an ironic (sometimes derogatory) nickname for those parts of the working class that harbor reactionary and racist views, particularly in rural areas.

[4] Even a simple cross-table shows no significant difference between cities and rural areas when it comes to membership.

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